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SENATE MEMORIAL 62

49TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2009

INTRODUCED BY

David Ulibarri

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO CONVENE A TASK FORCE TO
STUDY ILLICIT AND PRESCRIPTION DRUG AND ALCOHOL ABUSE AND
ADDICTION AMONG HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS
FOR MEASURES TO ADDRESS PATIENT SAFETY CONCERNS AND PROVIDER
ILLICIT AND PRESCRIPTION DRUG AND ALCOHOL ABUSE AND ADDICTION.

WHEREAS, drug and alcohol abuse is a serious problem in
the United States, with over twenty-two million Americans
having a substance dependence or abuse problem, according to
the department of health and human services' substance abuse
and mental health services administration; and

WHEREAS, the United States department of health and human
services' substance abuse and mental health services
administration reports that approximately sixteen million four
hundred thousand Americans are illicit drug users; and

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1 WHEREAS, the national institute on drug abuse reports that
2 forty-eight million people have used prescription drugs for
3 nonmedical reasons in their lifetime, which is approximately
4 twenty percent of the population of the United States; and

5 WHEREAS, the journal *Alcohol Health and Research World*
6 reports that nearly fourteen million Americans meet diagnostic
7 criteria for alcohol use disorders; and

8 WHEREAS, the United States department of health and human
9 services' substance abuse and mental health services
10 administration reports that the vast majority of illicit drug
11 users, or fifteen million out of sixteen million four hundred
12 thousand illicit drug users, hold full-time jobs; and

13 WHEREAS, the United States department of health and human
14 services reports that nearly seventy-five percent of all adult
15 illicit drug users are employed, as are most binge and heavy
16 alcohol users; and

17 WHEREAS, the United States department of health and human
18 services' national institute on drug abuse reports that
19 employed drug abusers cost their employers about twice as much
20 in medical and workers' compensation claims as their drug-free
21 co-workers; and

22 WHEREAS, health care is expected to generate three million
23 new wage and salary jobs between 2006 and 2016, more than in
24 any other industry; and

25 WHEREAS, according to the United States bureau of labor

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1 statistics, health care is the largest industry in the American
2 economy; and

3 WHEREAS, health care workers have a high incidence of
4 occupational injury and illness and have physically demanding
5 and mentally stressful jobs; and

6 WHEREAS, the United States department of justice reports
7 that health care workers are as likely as anyone else to abuse
8 drugs; and

9 WHEREAS, when health care providers are impaired by
10 illicit or prescription drug or alcohol abuse on the job,
11 patients may suffer adverse health outcomes due to medical
12 errors and other results of impaired functioning;

13 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE
14 OF NEW MEXICO that the department of health be requested to
15 convene a health care provider illicit and prescription drug
16 and alcohol abuse task force to study the problems faced by
17 health care professionals and the cost of impairment to
18 patients, colleagues and health care costs; and

19 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the department of health meet
20 with representatives from the New Mexico medical board; the
21 board of nursing; the national union of hospital and health
22 care employees; the American medical association; the personnel
23 board; and specialists in identifying and treating illicit and
24 prescription drug and alcohol abuse and addiction; and

25 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the health care provider

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1 illicit and prescription drug and alcohol abuse task force
2 devise protocols regarding measures to protect patients from
3 the consequences of impaired functioning in health
4 professionals who abuse illicit and prescription drugs or
5 alcohol on the job; the identification of illicit and
6 prescription drug and alcohol abuse and addiction; offering
7 treatment and drug and alcohol testing to health care
8 professionals identified as facing abuse or addiction issues;
9 any disciplinary measures that professional licensing boards
10 may take to address on-the-job illicit and prescription drug or
11 alcohol abuse; and any regulatory requirements that
12 professional licensing boards may implement to ensure
13 compliance with recommended protocols for drug and alcohol
14 testing; and

15 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the health care provider
16 illicit and prescription drug and alcohol abuse task force
17 report its findings to the interim legislative health and human
18 services committee by October 1, 2010; and

19 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the health care provider
20 illicit and prescription drug and alcohol abuse task force
21 publish its findings on the department of health's web site and
22 in a written report for general distribution; and

23 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
24 transmitted to the secretary of health; the president of the
25 New Mexico medical board; the secretary of the board of

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1 nursing; the president of the national union of hospital and
2 health care employees; and the president of the American
3 medical association.

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